Henry Blyth's Contract.

Containing an Account of his Way and Manner of his Wooing his Lass, in a fine and elegant Discourse to the Minister's Wife his Mistress.

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WELL Maistris, I'm come out o' Dundee: I could get naithing to gi' the horse draff in, but the skull; you women ay tak's his trough to keep sand in for scouring their sushicads i' the bink: well I wat he's a good beast, God bless him, that I dinna' forspeak him, and is as well forquainted wi' me, as if I had been seven year in's company. In troth, Maistris, folk has ay need to defleet fat they are doing; for the day as I'm comin alangs the cassaway o' Dundee, the lairds brother that cam here, cry'd me up

and ga' me a bicker, and comin out I fell down the ſtair, an maiſt brook my neck, bat be a province I ſaved the barm. And you ken Maiſtris, ſan I'm ridin down by the pow upo' Maiſtris Fuſhiead, ſhe an I crakin together, an I no mindin fat ſhe's ſayn, tines my piſle, and gaes foret till I'm about a mile an a bittokie fra't; an minds ſays I, good faith Maiſtris, I've tint my piſle, an maun gae back for'tagain. Hout you're a fool cuſhie, let it gang there, it was nae meikle worth. Was nae meikle worth cothie. ſaul Maiſtris, it was as good a piſle as e'er was in a poor beaſt, an I wadnae geed for my halyears ſee yet, ſae I ged my wa's back, and gat it juſt far I tint it.

Now maiſtris, as you was ſayin, I'll gi' you a preſcriptification o' my life. Firſt, ſan I cam to the warld, as ſoon's I grew a body, my father was diſſolved to ſet me to the ſchool to learn to diſpel. and a chapman comin by, he bought me *the Chief End of Man* and a *Prognoſtication*: but I bein contravenable ran awa' and ged to the waſt-mill, an helped the millar: for he greed with the auld lady to uphad a' the gaun gear and ſhe furniſh'd him wi' a woman an gat the o'ercome to herſell: ſae this way I miſglekit a my learniment. Well, ſan I was bat a haſlang lad, I began to think how I ſhou'd com thro' the warld, an ye ken the beſt way was to disjoin myſelf to a halfmarrow, after the orderly cuſtom o' the land, ſan lads and laſſes bein deſolv'd to marry, cothie, Lord grant proſperity, generation mortification an divulſion to a' them that gangs that gate, cothie. Now always maiſtris I'll tell you the thing I'm gaun to tell you. The laſs's ſiſter that married Fuſhicam's guidfather, that dwalls down o' the laird o' Things land, began to look at me, an I to her an after they ſcorned us together, her uncle a very diſpondable woman, bids me meet her at the kirk-yard o' fuſhicad upo' Sunday.

Well afar aff as I cam near hand, I thought it was a market, an putting my hand i' fusnicad for something to the custom-wife, I mindit it was Sunday, an that there was nae occasen butmen an women a' thro'ither: Well, I com's in by, an sits down by the tent-side amo' them, an puts my bonnet as the rest did: sae by that time the lass that shou'd ha' been mine, cam in by, an as she was sittin down I'll ne'er f rget it, aine o' the men wi the black cloket necks contrarified out o'the beuk *That if a man was ordain'd for a thing, he wadna get win by't.* Well, that ga' me som harm sae wi' took a chappin o' ale at the tent-side, an cry'd in by upo' John Fulhicad that was p'shin at the east-g.vel, (his br.ther's sister's married to mylord King-horn's henwife, I believe his name's Lyon,) an ga' him a part o't. Then says I, cothie, sin there s but a de'asion here we'll sit an tak out our drink, an confer the greement till we meet at the bridal that's to be upo' Tysday, cothie, sae be e's e'en to you lass; I thank you lad, a twell its onforfaid o' me, fie an you binno as unwilling to take me cothie as I'm to tak you, let's e'en mak an end o't on Tysday cothie, conformably we forgathers in the afternoon, an lads has gotten in their stuff, an begin to grow ramage wi' the soup d nk; we devinc't upon the matter, an consponded to be contrived. Well, I was to gi' up our names to the kirk-sessions, an pay site-fidler to the box, to keep from getting on upo' the stool of repentance for a twalmonto to com: an for mens, that I was to get threty marks wi' her an a mare, an a' my fees were to be laid to that, if I dyd first, a my things were to be hers, an if she dyd neest, a me things were to be mine; the bairns were to be d vided amon' the first end o' the gear: the lads were to sy e'der than a the lasses, but the lasses war te com in before the lads in the ratification as John Fallow laid it down upo' write.

Well, twa'r three dazs after-hend ſhe com's to me upo'a day ſan I'm at the pleugh. an ſays Henry coſhie, ye ken far we did at the kirk-yrad an tee bridal, you'r a gay conſpectable wark lad, an I hae bein tried in barns an byrs, an can put my hand to a thing cuſhie as well's my neibers. An ſae I convolv'd, that ſin' it was the way that other folk did, an her kiſt was well made up wi' affans, I juſt arreſts her to meet me at Forgan the morn: ſe I ged my wa' hame, muſted my head, an made redy a clean o'erlay. my purſt handit task, a ſtaff an a blu banut i' my head, an riſes as ſoon as the cock gat o' upo' the kitchen, an cam on the king's highway to Forgan, an be the ſun was haf aell frae the lift I was at the Orchard an fam meets I but juſt my lord i' teeth Ho, good day Hendry co fat is your will my lord cothie. Ha' you got a wife yet Hendry co? Deil aine you gotten yourſel yet, my lord, cothie. Fat makes you ſo ſoon up, cothie? I've been tak n in ſome meal Henry co. Indeed my lord cothie, an you wad lift that houſe up to your ducat it wad coſt you leſs travel. How wad you do that Hendry co? My lord cothie, gar John Fuſhicad your officer raiſe the ground, an ſend in ſiller for tows to the balies o' Dundee, an ſhoot them in beneath the foundation, an cut trees to let i' o'er the brig, we'll carry it up in a forenoon an mak it twa cupple higher, an ſtrike thro' a throu-art. an it were but to ſee a ſick beaſt. He gat up wi' a gaffo' laughter, an ſays, well control'd Hendry co I'll gie you three dollars to grieve the wark. My lord cothie, I'll ſeek nothing bat the cloth E'ſpit Fuſhicad your honour's widow's tenant's wife reſts me, for the warld's making a tournament upo' her, an the corn no cailing up good years, you've meddl'd wi' a her gear, ilka hair o't cothie ſae it contains your honour to gi' me diſatisfiction: well Hendry cothie, there's my hand and a ſixpence that I'll ſee you wrang'd. Well, God detain and diſolve.

nour cothie: ſae I recove d my bannet an diſaluted him, an com's to the houſe far the neibers was ſittin i' the fire provincing an perverting the defairs o'the kintry, an fan they ſa me O welcome Hendry, here to your health an luck to the bargain. Drink it's welcome, cothie in good faith I with't a well I wat I thank you in conſcience, I wiſh we ne'er want war, let never ſorrow gang ſo near your heart.

Well maiſtris, I think ſhe's a gay laſſie an ſhe binna a war man nor her father, I'll be right well ſet upo' her: well I wat ſhe taks it well a kind, for her mother was as able a barn-man, as e'er held wind to the corn. The houſe I was to tak ran juſt down by the water-ſide, it was a gay ſeat miſdeamable houſe, wi' a butt an a ben, an a fire-ſide, an a cloſe that wad hadden a ſwine, the ha ſtood juſt i' the mids o' the floor, an the ſun came in at the waſt windock an the lads got their dorder-meat, with a diſportional yard that wad hae ſawn ſix firlots o' bear. Juſt as we'r previncing an diſcloſing up by com's Fuſhicam that dwalls down at the Brigend, an ſais, This man co maun pay co, for his houſe an yard co, twenty marks co. Saul ſtir chamberlain cothie, an you winna tak tuenty pund, keep them to yourſelf coehie. Well Hendry co, lick my thing an lay it to yours, an ſin it is ſae, that it maen be nae other way, than it ſude be, an if you'r deſiable, let's put black upo' fire upon't. He tak's out a lang thing, that ſok uſe to dofan they gae about the way o things, an ſcrape upo' paper a the diſſolvements an tenements o' the takins an bad me pit to my name, ſtir, co hie, I'm nae beuk'd learn'd Well then co, pit to your hand to my fuſhicad before witneſſes, and I'll deſerive for you.

The laſs ſeein a this, ſays, a' the ſin a bit I'll tak him, cuſhie, for he's a fool. I bein mair vocat an correminous wi the ſoup drink, an always bein ſir-alen, cothie, ſaul cummer, co hie, conſcience cothie,

gif I were as magſtragvagant an glaſtorious as other lads, I ſhou'd ken whether you're a man or a lad, an mak you never towork a turn after this deficientday, gae your gates in a vengeableneſs cothie. Sae maiſtris there is nae great ſkeith, for my maſter gart her pay the haf of the lawin, an ſaid, ſin you win'no intend the marriage, he ſhana' be the coſt, for fat ever ha been betwin you you've ay as mickle o'him as he has o'you. But ſhe cudnathrive, for ſhe gat the laird wi' bairn, and died i' the herring o't. For women, maiſtris, are fair thing'd whiles fan they tak it on: for your awn woman diſsabu'd me the laſt year becauſe I wadna claw the cow, to gar her milk come down and keep her frae flingin. they ca'd me frae heaven to hell about it; I was i' the mean time, delvin out the miniſters butt, an brok my wark loom; an ga'n to ſeek a lean o' the beadle's, they ran in before me, an gar'd his wife cry, com in by Hendry an get the faſhion of the houſe. Sae I ged in by, an thinkin ſhe was ga'n to gi' me cheeſe an bread, or ſome thing that wadna ſpeak to me; but ſhe gae me ſick a hurl I ne'er gat the like o't, ſin the day that Andrew Fuſhicam's daughter, a bangſter quean, met me i' the dyke an jam'd me, becauſe me an my maſter John Galons cooſt divots upo Sunday thou ignorance. I cou'd nae diſplunge a ſport as folk will do i' their daffin, but flang her down an milgrugl'd a her apron by meir rackliſneſs: ſhe was ſae angry that ſhe ruggit out a' my fuſhicad. an made me bald, that I never been like other folk till this deficient day. Sae, maiſtris, I never drew up wi anither, till I was ſent to my lord Fuſhicad's houſe wi' aples, beyond Aberdeen, for the bred water is, that you winna ſee a hill on the tither ſide o't: ſae as I'm i' my lord's houſe, ben com's our Lady Anne, a bonny laſſie' wi a black fuſhicadher head, an her face ſu o'blackſplaches, an ſays, Hendry cuthie, there's a groat to ye, an kiſs

that laſs at the wheel; as I was ſtriven, we tumbl'd down between a kiſt an the wa', an gat nae ſcouth to rin out for twa hours, but gin we had bein as lang thegither, I ſhgu'd a gotten a kiſs whether ſhewad or no, for I never leſt her till I gart her cry; an if I had ſtaid there till now, nae miſdoubts I mught hae married her.

Now maiſtris, i'm your man an the miniſter's, an if he conſiſt ſnae putting me awa, I winna bide, for I can'd live wi' you a' my days, he ſpeaks ſae mony good words. He obſtruckit me the laſt day that I wad riſe again; an I ſaid, cothie, ſtir I'ſe believe as other 'oneſt fo'ks do; an, indeed, ſtir, cothie, the beuk o' *Poggavy*, ſaid juſt as you ſay. an the o'erturn o't was ay three things, for it tell d, That though aine lay down in the gutter, an prayed to God to tak him out o' the gutter, yet an he made nae maughts o' himſelf, he would lie till he died, an God wad raiſe him up for a that. If I were good o' the membets, maiſtris, I mighl ha' learned a' my queſtions out o't, o' that beuk, for there was a things in that beuk, an the o'er turning o't was ay three things; ther was cats an pipers in't, an ſhips and ſwine, an horn'd beaſts on women, an mony things, bat I'm a mind to learn yet; for though we be alder the day than we'll be the morn, fo'ks are only detackit about my age. juſt like Mr Francis Fulhicad, that ſame day the beadle's wife an I laid upo' other about clawin the cow; an you ken maiſtris, you lent me to the officer's wife to harrow her wheat i' the Diverlane' afternoon; ſae as I was tel in you, by com's his honour rid.d on a hawk an a horſeon's arm, an thinkin I was as ſau'd as the officer's wife, ſays good day, honeſt man, can you ſet me upo' a maukin he e a ou., the deel a bit o' me is an honeſt man, cothie, an t pleaſe your honour, cothie, I'm but the miniſt; ſlad and I'm laborin this honeſt woman's but, he guid-

maa's fae trachl.d wi' my lord's wark, that we maun pit him alike wi's neighbours. Indeed, lad co, the gentels taks a hantle upondin, Ay, ay, ſtir, cotbie. bat an gentle fo'ks was ſemple fo'ks, an ſemple fo'ks, was gentle fo'k, ſemple fo'k wad be like gentle fo'k, an gentle fo'k wad be like ſemple fo'k, wi teat up gat a flock o' Fulhicads, and he geds wa's at the gallep.

I'll no contain you ony longer, maiſtris for I'm a mind to confer a wife gin the warld dinna mend, for we canna get naething but fat wi buy, an deel hed wi hae to buy it wi'. I had ains a idle life fan I was a malitious man, an ſhot our guns at the moon to learn us to had aff the rigs at *Bothwel-brig*; wi had nae wark than bat to lay down our things on the ground, an com back and fore; yet gin ony miſt to tak his neighbour's thing inſtead o' his ain, he gat o'er the crown.

Weil maiſtris, this be your leave, an I wiſs as well, an very wiſe fo'k ſays, I hat be a'ſt likes, an it bina the tae way it will be the tither; an that we'll hae king or queen, or ſome other thing, or elſe naething at a', an than ſo ks canna readily be out o' condition.

Now honeſt lad, poor Hendry's dead,
And a' his neighbour's got cheeſe and bread,
Then ſome did groan and ſhake their head,
When thus they ſaw,
But when they got ſo large a ſeed,
Chae'd grief awa'.

FINIS.

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